

§ 416.961 Your ability to do work depends upon your residual functional capacity.

If you can do your previous work (your usual work or other applicable past work), we will determine that you are not disabled. However, if your residual functional capacity is not enough to enable you to do any of your previous work, we must still decide if you can do any other work. To do this, we consider your residual functional capacity, and your age, education, and work experience. Any work (jobs) that you can do must exist in significant numbers in the national economy (either in the region where you live or in several regions of the country). Sections 416.963 through 416.965 explain how we evaluate your age, education, and work experience when we are deciding whether or not you are able to do other work.

§ 416.962 If you have done only arduous unskilled physical labor.

If you have only a marginal education and work experience of 35 years or more during which you did arduous unskilled physical labor, and you are not working and are no longer able to do this kind of work because of a severe impairment(s), we will consider you unable to do lighter work, and therefore, disabled. However, if you are working or have worked despite your impairment(s) (except where the work is sporadic or is not medically advisable), we will review all the facts in your case, and we may find that you are not disabled. In addition, we will consider that you are not disabled if the evidence shows that you have training or past work experience which enables you to do substantial gainful activity in another occupation with your impairment, either on a full-time or a reasonably regular part-time basis.

Example: B is a 60-year-old miner with a fourth grade education who has a life-long history of arduous physical labor. B says that he is disabled because of arthritis of the spine, hips, and knees, and other impairments. Medical evidence shows a combination of impairments and establishes that these impairments prevent B from performing his usual work or any other type of arduous physical labor. His vocational background does not show that he has skills or

capabilities needed to do lighter work which would be readily transferable to another work setting. Under these circumstances, we will find that B is disabled.

§ 416.963 Your age as a vocational factor.

(a) *General.* Age refers to how old you are (your chronological age) and the extent to which your age affects your ability to adapt to a new work situation and to do work in competition with others. However, we do not determine disability on your age alone. We must also consider your residual functional capacity, education, and work experience. If you are unemployed because of your age and you can still do a significant number of jobs which exist in the national economy, we will find that you are not disabled. We explain age as a vocational factor in appendix 2 of subpart P of part 404 of this chapter. However, we will not apply these age categories mechanically in a borderline situation.

(b) *Younger person.* If you are under age 50, we generally do not consider that your age will seriously affect your ability to adapt to a new work situation. In some circumstances, however, we consider age 45 a handicap in adapting to a new work setting (see Rule 201.17 in appendix 2 of subpart P of part 404 of this chapter).

(c) *Person approaching advanced age.* If you are closely approaching advanced age (50-54), we will consider that your age, along with a severe impairment and limited work experience, may seriously affect your ability to adjust to a significant number of jobs in the national economy.

(d) *Person of advanced age.* We consider that advanced age (55 or over) is the point where age significantly affects a person's ability to do substantial gainful activity. If you are severely impaired and of advanced age and you cannot do medium work (see § 416.967(c)), you may not be able to work unless you have skills that can be used in (transferred to) less demanding jobs which exist in significant numbers in the national economy. If you are close to retirement age (60-64) and have a severe impairment, we will not consider you able to adjust to sedentary or light work unless you have skills which are highly marketable.